AN ACT Relating to creating a task force to identify the role of the workplace in helping curb domestic violence; creating new sections; and providing expiration dates.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds that domestic violence causes physical and psychological harm, broken families, economic loss, and other societal ills. According to the center for disease control's national intimate partner and sexual violence survey, about one in three women and one in three men reported experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime. In Washington in 2017, over 54,000 domestic violence offenses were reported to law enforcement and 49 domestic violence homicides were committed.

(2) The legislature finds that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the severity of the domestic violence crisis and the urgency of addressing the crisis. Economic independence is highly correlated with preventing intimate partner violence, and the pandemic has decreased opportunities for economic independence across many groups. The increased gaps in childcare and social services under the pandemic, along with increased isolation with abusers, have exacerbated existing issues. Further, mandated closures and lockdowns
have decreased opportunities for community reporting of signs of domestic abuse, such as by teachers or medical professionals, and increased the bureaucratic difficulties in reporting processes.

(3) The legislature finds that the workplace may be the only location in which an individual experiencing domestic violence may be free from a perpetrator and feel safe. In either a physical or remote environment, individuals experiencing domestic violence may also find the workplace a place of shared confidences. Therefore, the legislature intends to create a task force to explore ways in which the employer and employee community may help curb domestic violence.

(4) This section expires June 30, 2023.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) The department of commerce shall convene a task force on domestic violence and workplace resources to identify the role of the workplace in helping to curb domestic violence.

(2) The members of the task force are as provided in this subsection. The department of commerce shall appoint:

(a) One member representing each of the following:
   (i) The association of Washington business;
   (ii) The national federation of independent business;
   (iii) The Washington hospitality association;
   (iv) The Washington retail association;
   (v) The Washington state labor council;
   (vi) The Washington coalition of sexual assault programs;
   (vii) The Washington coalition against domestic violence; and
   (viii) A federally recognized tribe;

(b) A business owner;

(c) A survivor of domestic violence; and

(d) Up to two additional members.

(3) The task force shall choose the chair or cochairs from among its membership.

(4) The task force shall review the following issues:

(a) The role of the workplace in the lives of individuals experiencing domestic violence;

(b) The appropriate role of employers and employees in helping reduce the incidence of domestic violence; and

(c) Whether legislation is needed to address the issues outlined in this subsection.
(5) The department of commerce shall convene the meetings and provide staff support for the task force.

(6) The task force shall submit:

(a) A preliminary report with its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2021; and

(b) A final report with its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2022.

(7) This section expires June 30, 2023.